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ABSTRACT

This report describes how courses offered by the Department of Library/Media Technology at Northland Pioneer College (Arizona) can be effective in bridging the gap between the professionally trained master's degree librarian and the untrained library clerk or volunteer. The courses, which are typically offered on weekends, are designed to specifically assist individuals working in isolated rural settings. The courses are founded on the philosophy that the community can be an important library resource and that community involvement and ownership are important to the success of a library. It is noted that the college is making an effort to recruit students who are not working in libraries, but who would be challenged by a library career, including professionals seeking career changes and housewives re-entering the workforce. A copy of a Northland Pioneer College flyer advertising its library courses concludes the report. (MAB)

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EVER THOUGHT OF A LIBRARY CAREER?: PRESENTING LIBRARY/MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AS A POSITIVE CAREER OPTION

by

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April 9, 1992

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EVER THOUGHT OF A LIBRARY CAREER?: PRESENTING LIBRARY/MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AS A POSITIVE CAREER OPTION

The library career scene is changing along with today's economy. Many libraries can no longer afford to hire graduate professional librarians for middle management positions, and some have had to eliminate these positions. Libraries in rural areas are particularly hard hit. Many of the libraries in rurally isolated Northeastern Arizona do not have sufficient funds to hire even one professionally trained master's degree librarian. Many are largely dependent on volunteer help, and others have only on the job training as their only academic reference. The Department of Library/Media Technology at Northland Pioneer College is helping to bridge the gap between the professionally trained master's degree librarian and the untrained library clerk or volunteer working in a one person library. Courses are presented at convenient times--usually on weekends. Individuals enrolled in the classes have mentors who interact with them answering questions and assisting with problem solving. Special modules are built into the courses which are designed to specifically assist individuals working in isolated rural settings. Class sessions are designed to combat isolation. Students are encouraged to look at the entire community as a library resource. In so doing, they are encouraged to recruit additional library volunteers and library supporters. With careful nurturing, these individuals may even become library employees. A great deal of individuality is found in the libraries that are impacted by this program, and a student's individuality and uniqueness is stressed, as well as the individuality and

uniqueness of a particular library setting. Students are taught to be library pioneers, in that their library career can be anything they want it to be. The sky is the limit!

Community awareness is an important program component. When a community identifies with a library, and claims ownership in the library and its programs, the library and its programs will be more successful. Students are taught to find their own challenges, rewards, stimulation and fun. When they interact with other students during class sessions, new ways to achieve these goals are often achieved.

In recent years, a concerted effort has been made to recruit students who are not working in libraries, but who would be challenged by a library career. We are finding that often, our students are our best advertisements. Libraries are happy work environments. They are stimulating and challenging. Students are coming from many ranks--from professionals seeking career changes to housewives re-entering the workforce. Bookmarks and flyers have been designed to encourage individuals to consider library career options. The bookmarks and flyers have been distributed to area libraries. The Arizona State Library Association featured a bookmark in one of its issues as an advertisement. More than 400 individuals have been attracted to this program. Fifteen individuals reveived degrees or certificates during commencement exercises in May of 1991.

In many ways the program is a grass roots approach to librarianship and its many facets. Most importantly, the program is working. It is appealing to individuals who are making a difference in the communities they serve in their own particular library setting.

Ever thought of a Library Career?

Careers in libraries are challenging, rewarding, stimulating, informative, educational, thought provoking and fun!

In fact, they can be anything *you* want them to be.

For more information, contact:
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